

Antonio Fernós-Isern

1895–1974

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1946–1965
POPULAR DEMOCRAT FROM PUERTO RICO

An “unpretentious and likable physician,” Antonio Fernós-Isern served in the public health sector for several decades, but the high point of his career in public service was his tenure as Puerto Rico’s longest-serving Resident Commissioner in the U.S. House of Representatives.¹ “Resembling an Old World diplomat” in his pince-nez, “Tony,” as he was known to his colleagues, saw Puerto Rico through some of the most transformative decades of its relationship with the United States.² A principal architect of the *Estado Libre Asociado* (Free Associated State, or ELA)—a relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico—Fernós-Isern, along with his close friend and political ally Luis Muñoz Marín, shaped Puerto Rico’s autonomous status for the second half of the 20th century. Regularly defending his American connections and those of his homeland against public and sometimes violent calls for the island’s independence, Fernós-Isern told his colleagues, “Our life, my life, and those of [the people] who now struggle in Puerto Rico, is the American life.”³

Antonio Fernós-Isern was born in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico, located in the eastern-central mountains, on May 10, 1895.⁴ When he was three years old, U.S. troops invaded Puerto Rico in the Spanish-American War. “I watched American soldiers come into my little town of San Lorenzo and raise the American Flag,” Fernós-Isern recalled. “I now know there were only five soldiers. At the time, I thought it was a whole battalion. I made friends with the soldiers. In fact, the first English words I learned, I learned from them.”⁵ Fernós-Isern attended elementary school and high school in Puerto Rico before enrolling in a medical preparatory program at the Pennsylvania Normal School in Bloomsburg. He earned his M.D. from the University of Maryland College of Physicians and Surgeons and School of Medicine in College Park in 1915.⁶ Fernós-Isern completed his

residency in cardiology in 1933 at Columbia University.

Fernós-Isern worked as a physician in Caguas, Puerto Rico, northwest of his hometown, before taking on a series of positions in public health. He served as the health officer for San Juan in 1919 and as Puerto Rico’s assistant commissioner of health from 1920 to 1921 and from 1923 to 1931. He became commissioner of health in 1931 but resigned in 1933 when the *Coalición* (the Coalition) took power, working on the faculty of the School of Public Health School of Tropical Medicine until 1935. As a member of the new *Partido Popular Democrático* (Popular Democratic Party, or PPD), Fernós-Isern returned to his position as commissioner of health in 1942, serving during a U-boat blockade in World War II that left Puerto Ricans without food imports and close to starvation.

Representing the PPD and seeking agrarian and industrial reform for the island, Fernós-Isern ran for Resident Commissioner in 1940, but lost to Coalitionist Bolívar Pagán.⁷ However, when Resident Commissioner Jesús Piñero was appointed governor of Puerto Rico in 1946, he announced his support for the PPD and tapped Fernós-Isern as his replacement.⁸ Fernós-Isern’s appointment surprised some Puerto Rican observers because it had been rumored that PPD leader Luis Muñoz Marín planned to select a younger man for the post. Fernós-Isern’s political ideas were not well known, but his alleged advocacy of the island’s independence was not considered particularly desirable in a representative to Congress.⁹ One observer noted that Fernós-Isern had earned the post because of his narrow loss to Bolívar Pagán in 1940. Also, his stately demeanor was deemed beneficial for the post. “Fernós is generally praised for his personality and his broad knowledge of English,” noted a reporter for *El mundo*. “In manners and appearance Fernós has the personal air of distinction of many members of the Latin



American diplomatic corps, and some circles that know Fernós express the opinion that he will be an ‘ambassador at the same time he is a congressman.’”¹⁰ Though he traveled to Washington in August to meet with Piñero and familiarize himself with his duties, Fernós-Isern did not take office until September 11, 1946. The PPD’s hegemony over Puerto Rico’s politics throughout the 1950s and early 1960s ensured his re-election. Winning on a party slate by margins as high as 68 percent—often in four-way races between various political parties—during some of the most peaceful elections in the island’s electoral history, with some of the largest voter turnouts, Fernós-Isern served 18 years, the longest tenure of any Resident Commissioner.¹¹ With his wife, Gertrudis (Tula) Delgado—an active member and an officer of the Puerto Rican Women’s Club in Washington—he moved to 1513 Woodley Place in Northwest Washington.¹² From his sixth-floor suite in the Longworth House Office Building, Fernós-Isern accepted assignments on the Committees on Agriculture, Armed Services, and Public Lands beginning in the 80th Congress (1947–1949); he remained on these committees for the rest of his career.¹³ Despite his inability as Resident Commissioner to accrue seniority on committees, Fernós-Isern increased his influence on the Agriculture Committee, which was then among the top ten House committees in terms of desirability to Members.¹⁴

Like his predecessors, Fernós-Isern focused first on the ailing Puerto Rican economy. Despite efforts at land reform and industrialization, Puerto Rico’s per capita income was one-fourth of the U.S. average. By 1950 a drop in federal expenditures and depressed rum sales in the United States caused the island’s normally “boom and bust” economy to flounder.¹⁵ “Present conditions in Puerto Rico are simply unbelievable,” Fernós-Isern observed. “Eighty percent of the population are the underprivileged classes with an income not beyond \$500 a year. There is terrific economic pressure on the people.”¹⁶ Fernós-Isern pushed for and finally achieved full old-age and survivor benefits for Puerto Ricans under the Social Security Act in 1951; disability benefits were extended in 1955.¹⁷ He also fought discrimination against native Puerto Ricans

in federal jobs. A 1952 agriculture appropriation bill stipulated that the salaries for federal employees from the mainland who were based in Puerto Rico would be 25 percent higher—because of a cost of living adjustment—than those of native Puerto Ricans with similar federal jobs. “The reason for the extra pay, as I understand it, is that the cost of living, at comparable standards, has been found to be higher in the offshore areas than in the mainland,” Fernós-Isern observed. “I maintain that if this is true it holds equally if your name is Smith or Martinez.”¹⁸

U.S. import regulations on Puerto Rican sugar were a particular focus for Fernós-Isern, as they had been for the island’s Resident Commissioners since the Jones–Costigan Act of 1934. In 1947 the House and Senate predicted a surplus after sugar had remained scarce during World War II. Both houses considered legislation restricting imports of Puerto Rican sugar, and a *Washington Post* reporter predicted a “hot floor fight” over the quotas assigned to various sugar-producing regions. Cuba’s quota, in particular, was slated to increase, as that nation increased its wartime production at the behest of the United States.¹⁹ Puerto Rico’s quota of 910,000 tons was well below the island’s capacity for production. Fernós-Isern and longtime island advocate Representative Fred L. Crawford of Michigan, who chaired the Insular Affairs Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Possessions, led the opposition to the bill, noting the restrictions on Puerto Rico’s ability to refine its own product, which Fernós-Isern estimated would bring in \$20 million a year, adding to an unfair balance of trade between Puerto Rico and the mainland.²⁰ “It is only fair that the rules of trade be applied to the island without discrimination,” Fernós-Isern observed. “We have no other market than the mainland market.”²¹ But neither Crawford nor Fernós-Isern offered any amendments to the final bill because Fernós-Isern claimed it was too late. “Conversations went on,” he noted. “Most of the sectors engaged in sugar production are agreed, and we do not want, even if we could, and we cannot, to upset the apple cart.”²² When the Sugar Act was slated for renewal in 1951, Fernós-Isern and Crawford lobbied for a higher quota. “Sugar is the backbone of the Puerto

Rican economy,” Fernós-Isern stated. After the 1948 act, he noted, “Puerto Rico was not given a marketing quota sufficient to take care of its production. This hit us in the Achilles heel of our economy: 1948, 1949, 1950, and 1951 have been years of anguish for Puerto Rico.”²³ Fernós-Isern’s and Crawford’s efforts increased Puerto Rico’s quota to a more reasonable 1,080,000 tons.²⁴

Puerto Rico’s weak economy drove its residents’ migration to the United States, particularly to the El Barrio neighborhood in New York’s Upper East Side. In 1947 the Welfare Council of New York estimated that the city’s population added between 1,500 and 3,000 Puerto Ricans each week.²⁵ Fernós-Isern attributed this wave of migration to the island’s sugar dependence and its “half-way” industrialization—conditions he sought to ameliorate—coupled with its 110 percent increase in population between 1900 and 1940.²⁶ He promoted migration along with relief for overburdened New York City social programs, suggesting the Puerto Rican legislature establish an agency to advise migrants to the city.²⁷ Fernós-Isern also compared the state of the island’s public health with that of postwar Europe.²⁸

Fernós-Isern’s focus on migration to the mainland carried over to demands for more transportation options. He proposed a measure to increase the number of steamboats for passengers between the island and the mainland, authorizing the Maritime Commission to cover half the cost of new vessels for Puerto Rican trade. (Under the current law, construction subsidies were available only for ships used for foreign trade along essential routes.) Fernós-Isern insisted the bill to increase the number of lines above prewar levels would help promote tourism on the island and boost the local economy.²⁹ In a rare move, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce supported the subsidy, citing the need to construct more vessels and increase foreign trade.³⁰

Fernós-Isern’s legacy in the House was the transformation of the relationship between the U.S. government and Puerto Rico. Assisted by political maneuvering on the part of Muñoz Marín, Fernós-Isern changed Puerto Rico from a territory that was governed by the relatively restrictive

provisions of the 1917 Jones Act to a free associated state—an autonomous position unique to Puerto Rico. Fernós-Isern capitalized on the international attention on the island’s status that resulted from Governor Rexford Tugwell’s controversial leadership throughout the 1940s as well as on the drive toward decolonization after the Second World War.³¹

On August 4, 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed the Crawford–Butler Act, marking the first time an unincorporated U.S. territory was permitted to elect its own governor, and fulfilling a request made by the Puerto Rican legislature as early as 1943.³² Chairman Crawford sponsored the bill in the House, and a similar piece of legislation was introduced in the Senate by Hugh Butler of Nebraska. Fernós-Isern remained quiet during House debate on the bill but spoke extensively in its favor during committee hearings. “What are the political aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico?” he asked the Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs. “The political aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico may be summed up by stating that we consider ourselves as belonging in the world of democracy.... Our maturity within a democratic republican system of government should indeed be recognized” after a half century.³³ In 1948, Muñoz Marín and his PPD Party won handily, making Muñoz Marín the first elected governor of Puerto Rico and returning Fernós-Isern to office.

Considering his party’s windfall victory in the 1948 election as a mandate, Fernós-Isern sought the autonomy denied to Puerto Ricans by the Crawford–Butler legislation. During Governor Muñoz Marín’s visit to Washington, Fernós-Isern introduced H.R. 7674 on March 13, 1950, calling for a constitutional government in Puerto Rico.³⁴ The bill called for a plebiscite to determine the island’s status, a move that was supported by both houses of the territorial legislature. The legislature would then call a constitutional convention to act on the voters’ decision, and the resultant document would be subject to a popular vote in Puerto Rico, with final approval coming from the U.S. President and Congress. The final bill would supersede related portions of the Jones Act of 1917.³⁵

When the bill was introduced, Fernós-Isern said to his colleagues, “The charter upon which this local government is based has never been adopted by the people of Puerto Rico. That such a charter be substituted by a constitution of the people’s adoption is now a fitting and necessary step in order to perfect the democratic nature of our system of government.”³⁶ The legislation slid easily through Congress, based largely on testimony from Puerto Rican and American officials declaring its advantages for Puerto Ricans and its importance for international relations.³⁷ Fernós-Isern’s bill passed both houses on voice votes, with very little opposition.³⁸ President Truman signed Public Law 600 on July 3, 1950.

Fernós-Isern chaired the constitutional convention, which began September 17, 1951. The final document contained a preamble and nine articles declaring Puerto Rico’s loyalty to the United States and its Constitution and a bill of rights as well as a passage from the United Nations’ Declaration of Human Rights that conferred the right to work and the right to basic health care. A final draft was submitted to Governor Muñoz Marín on February 21, 1952, and Puerto Rican voters agreed to the constitution by plebiscite with a margin of more than 4 to 1 on March 3, 1952.³⁹

But in Congress, Members debated the constitution’s specifications for providing services to poor Puerto Ricans. Both houses amended the bill before passing it, most significantly striking rights from the borrowed United Nations document. House amendments also clarified that nonsectarian schools would receive the same funding as parochial schools. Some Members argued that the protections were so broad, they had a socialistic or communistic tinge.⁴⁰ Fernós-Isern, who had submitted his own annotated version of the document to Members of Congress before the debates, was quick to point out that the constitution abided by the criteria set forth in Public Law 600 and also addressed the specific needs of Puerto Ricans.⁴¹ “Puerto Rico is a poor country. The people have a low level of existence,” he noted. “They expect more of the Government than they would, if they had at least the income or the average income of the poorest State of the Union.”⁴² He defended the clauses in question,

noting that the document granted Puerto Rico a certain level of autonomy. Fernós-Isern felt Congress’s role stopped at making sure the document complied with Public Law 600 and the U.S. Constitution. “This is a Constitution for Puerto Rico and for Puerto Rican conditions.... We do not understand that if Congress approves our constitution, Congress will subscribe to the provisions of our constitution, section by section as if it were adopted by the Congress itself,” he argued. “If such were the case, if the constitution were adopted by Congress as a law of Congress, it would be no constitution at all. It would be an organic act. We have understood that the constitution was to be submitted to Congress so that Congress would make sure that we complied with the requirements Congress laid down for us.”⁴³ Fernós-Isern reluctantly endorsed the House amendments, primarily in an attempt to see the bill through to final passage.⁴⁴

Fernós-Isern praised and defended the ELA throughout the 1950s. In 1953 he was appointed an alternate delegate representing Puerto Rico and the United States at the United Nations, where he helped the U.S. government make the case that Puerto Rico was fully self-governing and no longer a colonial possession.⁴⁵ The Resident Commissioner gave annual addresses on the House Floor commemorating the July 25 anniversary of the ELA, updating Members on Puerto Rico’s progress, and praising the commonwealth compact. “Its march of progress is steady. Under it, freedom is assured to all in Puerto Rico.... Peace and law and order prevail. Prosperity is vigorously manifested. Unemployment is down. Living standards are elevated,” he noted in 1953. “The people of Puerto Rico are happy, and they thank God they can be happy in freedom, in peace, and in prosperity.”⁴⁶

Fernós-Isern’s assessments drew increased opposition from the Nacionalistas (Nationalists), who plotted in the year following the creation of the commonwealth compact to assassinate him and Muñoz Marín.⁴⁷ On the afternoon of March 1, 1954, Nacionalistas attacked the House Chamber, shooting into the crowded well and wounding five Members. When the House reconvened the next afternoon, Fernós-Isern, who had been in his office

during the shooting, was the first Member recognized to speak, and he walked to the well while his colleagues applauded.⁴⁸ “Mr. Speaker, on no occasion could I address this House with deeper sorrow,” he intoned. “To add to my consternation, the name of the dear island of my birth was invoked by the reckless vandals who staged this terrible deed yesterday.... The bullets that were shot did not only sorely hurt five of our colleagues; they all hit the heart of Puerto Rico.” Fernós-Isern also submitted resolutions of condemnation from Governor Muñoz Marín and from the Puerto Rican legislature.⁴⁹ Security increased significantly around the Capitol complex after the shooting, and Fernós-Isern and his wife received 24-hour police bodyguards.⁵⁰ The shooting was Fernós-Isern’s most vivid memory of his House service.⁵¹

Reacting toward the end of his House career to violence by the Nacionalistas and increasing demands for Puerto Rican statehood, Fernós-Isern sought various amendments to Public Law 600 to give Puerto Rico even more autonomy. On March 23, 1959, he submitted H.R. 5926, the Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act (or the Fernós–Murray bill), to replace Public Law 600 with “Articles of Permanent Association” between the people of Puerto Rico and the United States. The bill sought no immediate changes to Puerto Rico’s status but attempted to clarify language left over from the Jones Act and unaddressed by Public Law 600; as Muñoz Marín said, H.R. 5926 was a “cosmetic job” to do away with “warts and other blemishes” of previous legislation.⁵² But Fernós-Isern withdrew the bill on the advice of Muñoz Marín in the face of sturdy resistance from bureaucracies in the territory and within the federal government. Congressional views toward the territories had also changed; Hawaii and Alaska were close to achieving statehood, lending more support to this movement. Fernós-Isern submitted a second bill addressing some of the most vehement protests, but that measure did not make it out of committee. Moreover, the failure of both bills was a significant blow to the PPD’s power, but Muñoz Marín and Fernós-Isern were undeterred.⁵³ The former wrote President John F. Kennedy on June 10, 1962, near the 10th anniversary of the commonwealth,

stating his intention to ask the insular legislature to seek a plebiscite revisiting Puerto Rico’s status with the United States. Kennedy agreed, and the two also sought to secure Puerto Ricans the right to vote in U.S. presidential elections. Protesters who opposed the upcoming plebiscite broke into Fernós-Isern’s office and destroyed papers, furniture, and photographs of President Kennedy and Governor Muñoz Marín.⁵⁴

In March 1963 Representative Wayne Aspinall of Colorado submitted H.R. 5945, a bill to create a commission to study Puerto Rican status. Fernós-Isern spoke of his support for the measure, outlining the political history of Puerto Rico and the United States beginning with the Foraker Act. Of the ELA, he observed, “It was not possible at that time this pioneering effort in self-government within the framework of an association were [*sic*] created to [attain] a point of perfection. Experience and realities would assert themselves and determine the necessary adjustments.”⁵⁵ In 1964 following the bill’s passage, Fernós-Isern served as a representative of the PPD on the United States–Puerto Rico Commission on the Status of Puerto Rico.

Fernós-Isern did not run for re-election as Resident Commissioner in 1964; instead, he ran for and won a seat in the insular senate.⁵⁶ “I decided that a new generation, coming behind us, should take over,” he told his House colleagues. “I thought it was time that I go back to Puerto Rico and enjoy what years of life I may still be granted by the Lord; to enjoy the breezes and the sunshine and the beautiful views of Puerto Rico.”⁵⁷ Members filled nearly a dozen pages of the *Congressional Record* with tributes to their longtime colleague, noting his role in creating the commonwealth. “Dr. Fernós established in the House a reputation for effective, dedicated work,” observed future Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma. “He also established his place among the greatest of our political geniuses because of his role in the creation of the Commonwealth relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. Puerto Rico’s broadened political ties and major economic and social reforms might not have been realized had Dr. Fernós failed to supply the skill and persistence to

accomplish the required legislation.”⁵⁸ The *Washington Post* noted Fernós-Isern “has earned not gaudy celebrity.... His methods have been those of quiet persuasion, and he has eschewed hucksterism and humbug.”⁵⁹ Fernós-Isern served four years in the Puerto Rican senate before retiring in 1969. He remained in Puerto Rico until his death from a heart attack in San Juan on January 19, 1974. “A force on the move has been halted, and the lights of Puerto Rico have been dimmed,” said president of the Puerto Rican senate Cancel Rios as Fernós-Isern lay in state in the capitol in San Juan.⁶⁰ The former Resident Commissioner was laid to rest in the National Cemetery in Old San Juan.

FOR FURTHER READING

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, “Antonio Fernós-Isern,” <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.

Fernós-Isern, Antonio. *Estado libre asociado de Puerto Rico: Antecedentes, creación y desarrollo hasta la época presente* (Rio Piedras, PR: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1988).

_____. *Original Intent in the Constitution of Puerto Rico: Notes and Comments Submitted to the Congress of the United States* (Hato Rey, PR: Lexis-Nexis Puerto Rico, 2002).

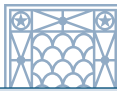
NOTES

- 1 “Envoy to Congress,” 25 September 1964, *Washington Post*: A24.
- 2 A. W. Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution* (San Juan: La Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2006): 258; Members used Fernós-Isern’s nickname in their tributes to him upon his retirement from Congress. See, for example, *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (10 September 1964): 21944; *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1964): 23426, 23429; and *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 October 1964): 24018.
- 3 *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1952): 6180.
- 4 There is no information on Fernós-Isern’s parents or siblings.
- 5 *Congressional Record*, House, 83rd Cong., 1st sess. (16 February 1953): 1121.
- 6 Fernós-Isern later received an honorary law degree from this institution. See “Degree to Be Given,” 19 March 1961, *Washington Post*: B6; “Seven to Be Awarded GW Honorary Degrees,” 31 May 1961, *Washington Post*: A4.
- 7 Richard E. Sharpless, “Puerto Rico,” in Robert J. Alexander ed.,

Political Parties of the Americas (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982): 620; Fernando Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 1809–2000* (Mayagüez, PR: Editorial Isla, 2003): 191–194.

- 8 Appointments to fill vacancies for Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners are permitted under the Jones Act of 1917 (39 Stat. 964). The following Resident Commissioners were appointed to their first terms: José Pesquera of Puerto Rico (1932), Quintin Paredes of the Philippines (1935), Joaquin Elizalde of the Philippines (1938), Bolívar Pagán of Puerto Rico (1939), Carlos Romulo of the Philippines (1944), and Antonio Colorado of Puerto Rico (1992). See *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/>.
- 9 Charles McCabe, “Aluden a su actitud pro independencia,” 14 August 1946, *El mundo*: 1; Representative Vito Marcantonio of New York also refers to Fernós-Isern’s support for independence in debate on Public Law 600. *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1950): 9587. There are no sources in English regarding Fernós-Isern’s political views on the status issue before his work on Public Law 600, but Luis Muñoz Marín’s transition on this issue is well documented. See, for example, Surendra Bhana, *The United States and the Development of the Puerto Rican Status Question, 1936–1968* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1975): 73–92.
- 10 “En modales y apariencia, Fernós tiene el aire personal de distinción de muchos miembros del cuerpo diplomático latinoamericano y algunos círculos que conocen a Fernós opinan que éste será un ‘embajador a la vez que congresista.’” Charles McCabe, “Aluden a su actitud pro independencia,” 14 August 1946, *El mundo*: 1. Translated as “They Refer to His Pro Independence Activity” by Translations International, Inc. (August 2011).
- 11 Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 1809–2000*: 210, 216–217, 223–224, 229–231, 239.
- 12 “Puerto Rican League Plans Party Sunday,” 19 December 1947, *Washington Post*: C7; *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1964): 23429; “Spring Is Time for a Change, Organizations Elect New Heads,” 29 May 1953, *Washington Post*: 26; “Puerto Rican-American Group to Honor Officers,” 22 June 1951, *Washington Post*: C4. According to the *Congressional Directory*, Fernós-Isern and his wife had no children, but obituaries mention three children: Manuel; Antonio, Jr.; and Maria Delores. *Congressional Directory*, 86th Congress (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960): 181; Connie Arena, “Island Mourns Passing of Fernós Isern,” 21 January 1974, *San Juan Star*: 1.
- 13 Fernós-Isern’s offices were located in the Longworth House Office Building throughout his career. From 1947 to 1950 he occupied suite 1632, and from 1951 to 1964 he occupied suite 1710. *Congressional Directory*, various editions.
- 14 Garrison Nelson, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1947 to 1992*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1994):

293. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 also stipulated which committees Resident Commissioners could serve on (Act of August 2, 1946, ch. 753, 60 Stat. 830 § 122); Charles Stewart III, "Committee Hierarchies in the Modernizing House, 1875–1947," *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (1992): 848.
- 15 James L. Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico: Institutional Change and Capitalist Development* (Princeton University Press, 1986): 204–205.
- 16 "Aid Planned Here for Puerto Ricans," 12 January 1947, *New York Times*: 25.
- 17 Marietta Morrissey, "The Making of a Colonial Welfare State: U.S. Social Insurance and Public Assistance in Puerto Rico," *Latin American Perspectives* 33, no. 1 (January 2006): 32.
- 18 *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 1st sess. (9 May 1951): 5131.
- 19 "Sugar Act of 1948." In *CQ Almanac 1947*, 3rd ed., 02-388-02-393. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc. 1948. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal47-1398114> (accessed 19 July 2012).
- 20 John W. Ball, "Congress Sees Sugar Surplus for Five Years," 10 July 1947, *Washington Post*: 7.
- 21 *Congressional Record*, House, 80th Cong., 2nd sess. (20 April 1948): 4655.
- 22 *Congressional Record*, House, 80th Cong., 1st sess. (9 July 1947): 8560.
- 23 *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 1st sess. (13 August 1951): 9893–9894.
- 24 "Sugar Act Extended." In *CQ Almanac 1951*, 7th ed., 02-92-02-95. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc. 1952. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal51-1405903> (accessed 19 July 2012).
- 25 "Aid Planned Here for Puerto Ricans," 12 January 1947, *New York Times*: 25; "Puerto Rican Drift to Mainland Gains," 31 July 1947, *New York Times*: 25.
- 26 "Aid Planned Here for Puerto Ricans."
- 27 "Immigrant Aid Urged for Puerto Ricans," 30 October 1947, *New York Times*: 51.
- 28 "Health Funds Asked to Aid Puerto Ricans," 18 May 1949, *New York Times*: 29.
- 29 "Puerto Rico Seeks More Ship Service," 6 June 1949, *New York Times*: 37.
- 30 Helen Delich, "Merchant Ship Aid Advocated," 28 April 1950, *Baltimore Sun*: 7.
- 31 Alfredo Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change in Puerto Rico, 1898–1952* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, Inc., 1997): 117–118.
- 32 C. P. Trussell, "Present Enacts Puerto Rico Poll," 6 August 1947, *New York Times*: 20.
- 33 Hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs, Committee on Public Lands, *To Amend the Organic Act of Puerto Rico*, 80th Cong., 1st sess. (21 June 1947): 5–6, 9–10.
- 34 "Puerto Rico Backs New Charter," 31 March 1950, *New York Times*: 11.
- 35 "Puerto Rico Constitution." In *CQ Almanac 1950*, 6th ed., 409. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc. 1951. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal50-1378197> (accessed 19 July 2012).
- 36 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 81st Cong., 2nd sess. (14 June 1950): A1898–A1899.
- 37 Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change*: 127–131.
- 38 "Puerto Rico Gets Chance to Write Constitution as Truman Signs Bill," 4 July 1950, *New York Times*: 30.
- 39 Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 1809–2000*: 215; "Caribbean Charter," 9 March 1952, *Washington Post*: B4; "Letters to the Times," 17 March 1952, *New York Times*: 20; Montalvo-Barbot, *Political Conflict and Constitutional Change*: 135–136; Anthony Leviero, "Truman Endorses Puerto Rican Code," 23 April 1952, *New York Times*: 10.
- 40 "Puerto Rican Code Approved by House," 29 May 1952, *New York Times*: 28.
- 41 Fernós-Isern's document submitted to Members of Congress was republished as *Original Intent in the Constitution of Puerto Rico*, 2nd ed. (Hato Rey, PR: Lexis-Nexis of Puerto Rico, Inc., 2002).
- 42 *Congressional Record*, House, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess. (13 May 1952): 5124.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 5124–5125.
- 44 Maldonado, *Luis Muñoz Marín*: 318–320; "Puerto Rican Code Approved by House," 29 May 1952, *New York Times*: 28.
- 45 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (10 September 1964): 21945.
- 46 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 83rd Cong., 1st sess. (23 July 1953): A4604.
- 47 "Attack Seen Red Inspired," 2 March 1954, *Baltimore Sun*: 7; "Puerto Rican Bares Plot against Ike," 14 September 1954, *Baltimore Sun*: 1; Robert M. Hallett, "Slaying Plot Cites Puerto Rico Group," 14 September 1954, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.
- 48 C. P. Trussell, "Shooting in House Causes Increase in Capitol Guards," 3 March 1954, *New York Times*: 1.
- 49 *Congressional Record*, House, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess. (2 March 1954): 2484.
- 50 "Puerto Rican Official Guarded," 2 March 1954, *New York Times*: 17.



- 51 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1964): 23424.
- 52 Price Day, "Run and Freedom," 18 May 1959, *Baltimore Sun*: 14.
- 53 Roland I. Perusse, *The United States and Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Equality* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1990): 38–39.
- 54 "Vandals Raid Office of Puerto Rico Aide," 7 August 1962, *New York Times*: 8.
- 55 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 1st sess. (23 October 1963): 20126.
- 56 Fernós-Isern announced his intention to retire when Muñoz Marín decided not to run for re-election for governor, in order to revitalize the PPD. See Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 1809–2000*: 239.
- 57 *Congressional Record*, House, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1964): 23431.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 23424.
- 59 "Envoy to Congress."
- 60 Arena, "Island Mourns Passing of Fernos Isern."



“WE KNOW THAT WE ARE
MEMBERS OF THIS GREAT
COMMUNITY OF THE UNITED
STATES, IN OUR OWN WAY, IN
THAT LITTLE ISLAND IN THE
CARIBBEAN. BUT WE SHOULD
NOT EXIST AS A POSSESSION.
HOW CAN 2,200,000
AMERICAN CITIZENS BE ONLY
A POSSESSION? WE MUST BE
A FREE PEOPLE IN A FREE
AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH.”

Antonio Fernós-Isern
House Floor Speech, May 28, 1952